

# California Department of Veterans Affairs



---

CAL-VET LOANS – VETERANS HOMES – VETERANS SERVICES – WOMEN VETERANS  
VETERANS CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS – VETS LICENSE PLATES

---

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Contact: Communications Office  
Andrew Kotch 916-653-2192/316-2641(cell)

### **JOHANNESSEN GAINS SENATE RULES COMMITTEE APPROVAL FOR CONFIRMATION**

**Sacramento, Ca.-** March 20, 2003 – The Senate Rules Committee, by a majority vote of 3 to 2, approved the appointment of Secretary K. Maurice Johannessen, by Governor Davis, as the new Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. The process now goes to its final step, that being a vote on confirmation by the full Senate.

“I am obviously pleased with the outcome of the hearing,” commented Secretary Johannessen. “Much information was shared with the Committee Members and I believe we were successful in demonstrating the positive direction in which this Department is moving.”

Contrary to the split vote on his confirmation, Johannessen was overwhelmingly supported by veterans groups throughout the state. Over one hundred veterans representing every military organization in California were in attendance and expressed a unanimous approval for his confirmation.

Over two dozen veterans, retired and active duty, from all branches of the service spoke publicly to the Committee in support of Johannessen. A particularly touching scene was a group of nearly 30 veterans, many in wheelchairs and walkers, who traveled over an hour and a half by bus from the Yountville Veterans Home to show their support for the new secretary.

Johannessen commented, “As our country enters into this time of conflict, it was heartwarming to see such an outpouring of veterans in support of my confirmation. They have much to be proud of for their service to the great nation, and I am proud to have this opportunity to serve them as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.”

After all had spoken in support of confirming Secretary Johannessen, Senator Burton, Chairman of the Committee, opened the floor for anyone opposed to the confirmation. No one rose to oppose the confirmation.

Johannessen, who served in the State Senate from 1993 to 2002, briefed the Committee on future projects, and the overall direction the Department is taking to serve veterans. Since accepting the Secretary’s position in December, Johannessen has initiated changes in the management

- more -

page 2:

California Department of Veterans Affairs/press release

structure at Headquarters. Similar changes have also been implemented at the three veterans homes at Barstow, Chula Vista, and Yountville. The Department is also working aggressively to begin the construction of five new veterans homes across the state. The first phase, architectural drawings for the homes in West Los Angeles, Lancaster, and Saticoy is expected to begin this spring with Fresno and Redding to follow shortly thereafter.

The Secretary, a United States Army veteran from the Korean War Era, chaired the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee for six years as a California State Senator. During that time Johannessen authored numerous bills that eventually became law, providing assistance to veterans, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, and most recently, the creation of the first statewide veterans cemetery already under construction in Shasta County, and the five new veterans homes.

California is home to nearly three million veterans.

~